

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7525
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AMEMBASSY ROME
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USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 0829

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EINV, PFOR, IT, MT
SUBJECT: ITALIAN/MALTESE INVESTMENT DISCUSSIONS

REF: (A) ROME 11851, (B) VALLETTA 0819,

SUMMARY: MINTOFF LEFT FOR ROME TODAY FOR SHORT
VISIT PRIOR 8-DAY VACATION. PRESSING TO SEE ANDREOTTI
PRIOR LATTER'S DEPARTURE FOR US. VISIT BY ITALIAN
INVESTMENT DELEGATION HERE LAST WEEK RESULTED IN AGREED
WORKING GROUPS TO PROMOTE TOURISM AND INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS
IN MALTA. ITALIAN AMBASSADOR DOES NOT EXPECT SERIOUS FOLLOW-UP
DISCUSSIONS ON NEUTRALITY GUARANTEE AND 1979-81 ECONOMIC AID TO
BEGIN BEFORE MID-SEPTEMBER. END SUMMARY

1. MINTOFF DEPARTED TODAY FOR TALKS IN ROME DESIGNED TO
FOLLOW-UP TALKS HELD HERE JULY 11-13 WITH AN ITALIAN
ECONOMIC DELEGATION. MINTOFF IS ACCOMPANIED BY ATTORNEY
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GENERAL MIZZI, FOREIGN SECRETARY ABELA, AND ALBERT MIZZI,
HEAD OF AIR AND SEA MALTA. FOLLOWING TWO DAYS OF TALKS
IN ROME, LATTER THREE WILL BE JOINED BY MINISTER OF JUSTICE
CASSAR AND WILL GO TO ALGIERS FOR TALKS THERE ON POST-
1979 CONCEPT FOR MALTA. MINTOFF WILL GO TO DUBROVNIK TO
BOARD YACHT OF MDC CHAIRMAN CASSAR FOR 8-DAY VACATION.

2. AMBASSADOR DA-RIN CONFIRMS ROME REFTTEL THAT ITALIANS SOUGHT TO NO AVAIL TO DISSUADE MINTOFF FROM VISIT. MINTOFF ALSO PRESSING TO SEE ANDREOTTI PRIOR HIS DEPARTURE FOR US VISIT, ALTHOUGH ITALIAN AMBASSADOR DA-RIN HERE SAYS ANDREOTTI HAS SENT WORD HE DOES NOT WANT TO SEE MINTOFF.

3. DA-RIN HAS GIVEN US COPY OF PROCES VERBALE SIGNED BY GOM MINISTER FOR PARASTATAL INDUSTRIES MICALLEF AND GOI DEPUTY MINISTER FOR STATE PARTICIPANTION CASTELLI COVERING TALKS HERE JULY 11-13 BETWEEN MALTESE AND ITALIAN ECONOMIC/INVESTMENT DELEGATION. (COPY POUCHED.) PAPER IS CATCH-ALL DOCUMENT RECORDING LONG LIST OF ITALIAN PROMISES TO CONSIDER COOPERATIVE PROJECTS IN NUMEROUS AREAS, FROM TOURISM TO CEMENT FACTORY, TO MINI-STEEL PLANT, TO OIL FIELD EQUIPMENT REPAIR. ITALIANS ALSO AGREED TO SET UP JOINT WORKING GROUPS ON TOURISM AND ON INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS "TO REASSURE MALTESE WE ARE SERIOUS". DA-RIN EMPHASIZED HOWEVER THAT NO COMMITMENTS MADE IN ANY AREA.

4. FURTHER VISUAL IF NOT SUBSTANTIVE EVIDENCE OF ITALIAN ROLE HERE WILL BE SEEN IN ARRIVAL JULY 25 OF ITALIAN DEFENSE MINISTER. DA-RIN SAYS IT FORTUNATE THAT MINTOFF WILL NOT BE PRESENT BECAUSE ITALIANS NOT PREPARED AT PRESENT TO HAVE FURTHER TALKS ON NEUTRALITY GUARANTEE AND WOULD NOT WANT THEM IN FIRST INSTANCE WITH DEFENSE MINISTER ANYWAY. MINISTER'S VISIT IS INTENDED TO FUCUS
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ON SPECIFICS IN WORK OF RESIDENT ITALIAN DEFENSE MISSION HERE AND POSSIBLY ON DISCUSSIONS AS TO EXTENSION OF PRESNET AGREEMENT COVERING THAT MISSION'S ACTIVITIES. ITALIAN MINISTER WILL BE GUEST OF PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER SANT.

5. REGARDING NEUTRALITY GUARANTEE AND GOM REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL AID TO COVER 1979-81 TRANSITION PERIOD, DA-RIN TELLS US HE DOES NOT EXPECT MUCH MORE TO HAPPEN BEFORE MID-SEPTEMBER. ITALIANS HAVE TOLD GOM THAT BALL IS NOW IN MALTESE COURT, BUT DA-RIN NOTES THAT FRENCH AND ITALIANS ALSO HAVE SOME COORDINATING TO DO BETWEEN THEMSELVES AS TO THE FORM AND POSSIBLY ELABORATION OF THEIR AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO PROVIDE BILATERAL GUARANTEES. FRENCH SAID TO BE SEEKING LANGUAGE THAT WOULD BRING FRENCH/ITALIAN GUARANTEES ON THIS INTO GREATER BALANCE WITH WHAT LIBYANS SEEM PREPARED TO PROVIDE. BUT DA-RIN AFFIRMED THAT ITALIANS AT LEAST WANT TO AVOID PARTICIPATION IN ANY MULTILATERAL ARRANGEMENT.

6. DA-RIN EXPECTS DISCUSSIONS WITH MALTESE ON THIS SUBJECT TO BE EXCEEDINGLY DIFFICULT, WITH MALTESE LINKING THIS CLOSELY WITH 1979-81 FINANCIAL DEMANDS. DA-RIN TELLS US

FOR FIRST TIME THAT HE EXPECTS MALTESE WILL PROBABLY ALSO LINK FINANCIAL REQUESTS DIRECTLY TO NATURE AND EXTENT OF ACCESS BY NON-SUPERPOWER NAVAL VESSELS TO GRAND HARBOUR REPAIR FACILITIES. DA-RIN SPOKE OF POSSIBILITY THAT MALTESE MAY EMULATE WHAT HE UNDERSTANDS TO BE YUGOSLAV PRACTICE OF STRICT LIMITATIONS ON NUMBERS OF FOREIGN NAVAL VESSELS IN REPAIR YARDS AT ANY ONE TIME AND ON DURATION OF STAY. DA-RIN SAID HE SEES FAIRLY SPECIFIC AGREEMENT ON THIS SUBJECT AS IN WEST'S INTEREST ANY WAY ESPECIALLY SINCE HE SEEMS TO ANTICIPATE THAT NON-SOVIET WARSAW PACT SHIPS MIGHT ALSO OCCASIONALLY SEEK AND GET ACCESS UNDER MINTOFF'S POST-1979 NEUTRALITY CONCEPT.

8. INCIDENTALLY, DA-RIN DESCRIBED RECENT CONVERSATION WITH LIBYAN AMBASSADOR HERE WHICH CONFIRMED HIS AND OUR SUSPICION
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THAT DRAFTS THAT WE HAVE SEEN (AND POUCHED TO DEPT) OF AGREEMENTS DETAILING LIBYAN READINESS TO SUPPORT MALTA ECONOMICALLY AND MILITARILY ARE MALTESE VERSIONS WHICH DO NOT AS YET HAVE ANY BINDING CHARACTER AS FAR AS LIBYA IS CONCERNED. LAINGEN

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